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ABSTRACT

Results of the University of Maryland, College Park (UMCP), 1981 University, New Student Census, which is based on data from both the 1-day and the 2-day freshmen orientation programs, are presented. The total sample consisted of 1,454 entering freshmen. Eighty-five percent of the students were white, 7 percent were black, 3 percent were Asian-American, 2 percent Hispanic, and 0.5 percent American Indian or Alaskan. The students came from families with a median family income of $35,000 annually. For over 60 percent of the students, UMCP was their first choice of all the colleges they applied to for admission. In regard to academic aspirations, 36 percent expected to earn a bachelor's degree, 35 percent a master's degree, and 24 percent a doctorate or professional degree. Over 80 percent of the incoming freshmen indicated that they sometimes felt anxious about succeeding in college, while 8 percent disagreed. Studying efficiently, budgeting time wisely, and selecting a field of study and/or career were considered to be the hardest parts of adjusting to college. Information was also obtained on the following areas: father's and mother's level of education, size of their high school class, their high school course of study, high school rank, extracurricular activities in high school, factors that contributed to their development during the last year, their study skills and habits, career plans, work experience, social and political attitudes, sex role attitudes, and attitudes toward the UMCP. (SW)

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Summary

Unlike previous surveys, the 1981 University New Student Census (UNSC) is based on data from both the one-day and the two-day freshman orientation programs. A weighting procedure was used to balance out the unequal samples from the two separate programs so percentages reported are representative of all UMCP freshmen.

The total sample consisted of 1,454 entering freshmen. Forty-six percent of the students surveyed were females, while 54% were males. Of this sample, 315 were from the one-day orientation, and 1,139 were from the two-day program. Eighty-five percent of the students were white, 7% were black, 3% were Asian-American, 2% Hispanic, and 0.5% American Indian or Alaskan. The students came from families with a median family income of $35,000 annually. Forty-five percent planned to live on campus and 41% were commuters.

In general, the students had quite positive attitudes toward the University, its faculty and services. For over 60% of the students, UMCP was their first choice of all the colleges they applied to for admission. As for their academic aspirations, 36% expected to earn a bachelor's degree, 35% a master's degree, and 24% a doctorate or professional degree. Over 80% of the incoming freshmen indicated that they sometimes felt anxious about succeeding in college, while 8% disagreed. Studying efficiently, budgeting time wisely, and selecting a field of study and/or career were considered to be the hardest parts of adjusting to college.

The 1981 University New Student Census (UNSC) is one in a series of annual surveys of incoming freshmen to the University of Maryland, College Park (UMCP). Unlike previous surveys which were based only on the two-day freshman orientation program, this report is based on data from both the one-day and the two-day orientation programs. The results being reported are based on projections from a weighting procedure that balanced out the unequal samples from the one-day (N=315) and the two-day (N=1139) orientation programs. There is a 95% chance that the percentages reported are correct ± 3% for all new UMCP freshmen.[1] Percentages reported below may not add to 100% due to rounding or not all response categories being reported.

General Description

The new freshmen were 54% males and 46% females; 85% of the sample was white, 7% black, 3% Asian-American, 2% Hispanic, and 0.5% American Indian or Alaskan. The students were asked to indicate which religion they were reared in and their present religious affiliation. Almost 44% of the students were reared as Catholics (40% presently Catholic), 32% were reared as Protestant (29% presently), 11% reared as Jewish (11% presently), and 8% none (15% presently).

About 20% of the students came from families with incomes of over $50,000 a year, while 10% of the students had family incomes of less than $15,000. Almost 32% had family incomes between $15,000 and $30,000, while 39% had family incomes between $30,000 and $50,000. The median family income of all the incoming freshmen was approximately $35,000.

When asked where they would be living this semester, 42% were planning to live with their parents or other relatives, 41% in the University residence halls, 4% in a fraternity or sorority house, and 2% in a room or private house. Approximately 7% expected to share a house or an apartment and 1% expected to live alone,

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[1] Those wishing more information on the weighting procedure should contact the junior author.

either in a house or apartment. In addition, the students were asked to indicate how far from campus they would be living. Approximately half the students (49%) expected to commute; another 7% were going to live less than three miles from campus, 9% said 3-5 miles away, 12% 6-10 miles from campus, 20% 11-50 miles away, and 1% said 51 miles or more away from campus.

Students were also asked to indicate their father's and mother's level of education. Five percent of the fathers (mothers: 4%) had less than a high school diploma, and 19% had graduated from high school (mothers: 36%). Fifty-six percent of the fathers had a college degree (mothers: 33%); 8% of these degreees were from UMCP (mothers: 4%), 6% from another college in the State of Maryland (mothers: 6%), and 43% from a college outside the State (mothers: 23%). Seventeen percent of the fathers completed some college work but received no degreee (mothers: 23%): 3% at UMCP (mothers : 3%), 5% at another college in the State of Maryland (mothers: 6%), and 9% from a college outside the State (mothers: 14%). Finally, only a quarter (25%) of the students' parents attended the University's parent orientation program in the summer.

Educational Background

More than one-third (40%) of the sample graduated from a high school class of 300-499 students, 21% from a class of 100-299, 23% from a class of 500-699, and 6% from a class of 700-899. Only 3% graduated from a class with 900 or more students and approximately 7% were from classes with fewer than 100 students.

The majority of the students graduated from public high schools (84%); 63% of those students took academic courses, 2% commercial courses, and 19% a general course. Nine percent of the students came from parochial high schools: 7% graduated from a college academic course, 1 % a general course, and 1% a commercial course. Fewer than 6% of the students came from private, non-parochial high

schools: 5% from a college academic course and 1% from a commercial or general course.

Thirty percent of the freshmen said they were in the top ten percent of their high school graduating class, 33% were in the top 25% , 29% in the upper half of their class, and 6% in the lower half. Fewer than 1% of the students were in the lowest 25% of their class. As for their high school grade point averages, 15% reported an A or better, 68% had B averages, and 18% had C averages.

View of UMCP

Twenty-seven percent of the students came to UMCP because of its geographical location, 24% because of its good academic reputation, 16% because it is relatively inexpensive, and another 16% because of the quality of a particular department or program. Seven percent came because of parents' or family's recommendations, 4% due to advice from former students, and fewer than 1% because of a high school counselor or teacher's recommendation. Two percent came because UMCP was the most prestigious state school, while another 2% were not accepted elsewhere.

Of the various colleges applied to by students, UMCP was the first choice for 63% of them, second choice for 22%, third choice for 6%, and "more than third but not last choice" of 4%. UMCP was the last choice for only 2%. In keeping with the fact that 27% of the students said they came to UMCP because of its geographical location, about 47% of the students gathered most of their knowledge about UMCP by word-of-mouth, 18% from visits to the campus, 14% from University publications such as catalogs and bulletins, and 5% from college guides such as Lovejoy's or Barron's. Approximately 6% knew about UMCP from its publications, 3% from publicity about athletic teams and 3% from publicity about research or academic achievements.

In general, the students had quite a positive view of UMCP. Seventy-one percent of the students expected to get to know one or more faculty well in their

first year (4% disagreed). More than 40% of them felt that most of the instructors would care about students (16% disagreed), and almost 50% of them viewed UMCP as one of the best universities in the country (9% disagreed). Concerning their expectations of UMCP, 80% viewed UMCP's major function as providing a general learning environment (3% did not), and 50% saw its function as developing personal and social skills of people (11% disagreed).

Extracurricular Activities

Over 85% of the incoming freshmen had participated in an organized athletic team: 17% only before high school, 10% only in high school, and 58% both in high school and before high school. Fourteen percent of the students had never participated on an athletic team. Almost half the students (49%) expected to participate in some form of extramural sports at UMCP (20% did not), while 64% expressed an interest in becoming more physically active (9% did not). On the other hand, 43% indicated that they followed one or more UMCP athletic teams closely (33% did not). When asked what they considered most important in playing a game, 49% indicated that it would be to play as well as you are able, 41% to have fun - win or lose, 6% to play the game fairly, and 4% to beat your opponent.

Turning to non-athletic activities, 67% of the students expressed a desire to join some campus clubs or groups (6% did not), and 15% expected to be involved in religious activities on campus (50% did not).

Personal Development

"Which of the following contributed most to your own development during the past year?" was the question used to assess students' personal development. Almost 24% indicated that it was their job experience, while another 24% indicated that it was their social life (dating, parties, etc.). Fifteen percent felt that it was the friendships they made, 10% said independent or individual study or research, 9% course work, and 7% contact with teachers/counselors. Finally, 2% considered work with political/social action groups as most important

a median number of about 7 hours per week while in high school.

About 77% of the students expected to obtain a "B" average in their first semester at UMCP (and only 2% did not). As for their attitudes toward learning, only 10% considered getting a good grade in a course as more important than learning the course content, while 66% disagreed with the statement. Half of the students (50%) saw themselves as frequently volunteering to give answers or raise questions in class, while 19% did not.

Academic Plans

Regarding the highest degree they intended to obtain, 36% of the incoming freshmen expected to earn a bachelor's degree, 35% a master's , and 8% a doctorate. Sixteen percent of the students were planning to earn professional degrees: 8% in law and 8% in medicine. Less than one-tenth of a percent wanted a Divinity degree, and 2% an associate degree, while 1% did not expect to complete a degree.

Students were asked to choose the person most influential in their decision to attend UMCP. For 44% of the students it was their parents, for 17% it was another family member such as a brother, aunt or grandparent. Eleven percent of the students were most influenced by University students or alumni, 2% by University faculty or staff, and 6% by other friends and acquaintances. Eight percent were influenced by their high school friends and 5% by their high school teachers or staff.

Only 16% of the students had thought seriously about not going to college (74% had not), and 11% expected to transfer from UMCP and earn their bachelor's degree from another school. When students were presented this item: "Nationally, about 50% of university students typically leave before obtaining a degree. If this should happen to you, which of the following do you think would be the most likely reason?" 28% were absolutely certain that they would obtain a degree,

while 5% chose work with a group not involved in political/social action as foremost in their personal development.

Another question inquired about the type of leisure, non-required material that students had read in the past year. Forty-four percent read adventure, mystery or western fiction, 20% read sports and recreation, 20% read social science (history, economics and social problems), and 18% read poetry, plays and essays. As for more scientific material, 10% read science literature (math, physics), 14% technical "how to do it" manuals, and 16% read science fiction. About 14% of the students did little or no outside reading last year.

Thirty-eight percent of the incoming freshmen considered themselves leaders in high school, while 26% did not, and the rest were unsure. In addition, half (50%) of the students surveyed would describe themselves as "go-getters," while 13% would not, with 37% unsure.

Study Skills and Attitudes

Approximately 24% of the students questioned said that they always keep up with assignments, 34% said they usuaully keep up, 27% admitted to being behind in reading assignments sometimes, 11% indicated that they were usually behind, and 4% felt they were almost always behind in their reading assignments.

In a related question, for 38% of the students the ratio between cramming and studying systematically was 50:50; for 26% of them it was 70:30; for another 20% it was 30% cramming and 70% systematic study; 8% of the students did nearly all of their studying by cramming to meet deadlines; and 7% did nearly all of their studying systematically ahead of time.

On the average, 31% of the students studied 6-10 hours per week in high school, 29% studied 3-5 hours per week, 15% studied 11-15 hours, 10% said 1 to 2 hours per week, and 8% spent 16-20 hours per week studying. Almost 3% studied anywhere between 21 and 25 hours per week, 2% studied 26-30 hours, 1% 31 or more hours , and 2% did not study at all. On the whole, the students studied

while 22% would leave to accept a good job, 13% saw themselves leaving due to unsatisfactory academic achievement, and 12% indicated that it might cost more than they or their families could afford. Nine percent thought they would leave due to disinterest in their studies, while 3% indicated a lack of scholastic ability and 1% said a limited background knowledge of the subjects. Finally, another 1% were concerned about their insufficient reading or other academic skills.

On the other hand, students were also asked to specify their most likely reason for remaining at UMCP and completing graduation requirements. Thirty-one percent felt that a college degree was the only way to enter their chosen career, 20% felt that college graduates got better jobs, and another 20% would remain because of their interest in ideas and the pursuit of knowledge. In addition, 13% felt thay they needed a degree to enter graduate/professional school, 4% would stay because college graduates earn more money, 3% because their parents expected them to, and 1% wanted to gain experience from extra-curricular activities.

About half of the students (50%) seemed quite certain of their major field of study; they disagreed with the statement that they would likely end up majoring in a different academic field from the one that now seems appropriate to them, 15% agreed with the statement and the rest were neutral.

Career Plans

Freshmen reported that the major factors in their initial career choices were high earnings/advancement potential (27%), and intrinsic interest in the field (22%). Fourteen percent wanted to work with people, 5% with ideas, and 1% with things. In addition, 9% considered a well respected or prestigious occupation as most important, 7% were concerned with the job openings usually available, and 4% wanted a great deal of independence. Finally, almost 11% of the freshmen had not yet made a career choice.

In a related question, students were asked to indicate their main reason for deciding to go to college. Over 23% of the students indicated that it was to get

a better job, 16% came to college to prepare for graduate school, 10% wanted to learn job skills, and 5% wanted to make more money. Other reasons reported were to gain a general education (21%), and to develop themselves generally (15%). Five percent came to learn more about things, and fewer than one percent came to meet new and interesting people.

Students were asked to list occupations that were their vocational goals at this time. They were asked to specify three occupations, and these occupations were then coded according to Holland's (1970) model of career types. Holland's model involves classifying individuals into six personality "types" that fit best into certain work environments. These career types include the Realistic, Investigative, Artistic, Social, Enterprising and Conventional individuals. The percentages of students who fell into the various categories on their three occupational choices are presented in table 1.

Table 1.

Percentages of Different Career Types

	Realistic	Investigative	Artistic	Social	Enterprising	Conventional
1st choice	5%	43%	13%	12%	21%	6%
2nd choice	5%	41%	15%	13%	21%	5%
3rd choice	6%	27%	17%	21%	21%	8%

As reported in the above table, a major group of students chose Investigative occupations (43%) as their first choice, followed by the Enterprising (21%), Artistic (13%), and Social (12%). The popularity of Investigative occupations remained constant across the second (41%) and third (27%) choices.

Relating to the earlier question of why students came to college and the resulting pragmatic group versus the non-pragmatic group, there was a parallel

split in a separate question. Thirty-nine percent of the students agreed with the answer that the major function of UMCP was to prepare people for jobs, while 28% disagreed. Finally, regardless of why they came to college and what career they chose, the majority of the students (66%) expected they would readily find a job in their chosen fields when they graduated. Six percent disagreed, and the rest were undecided.

Work Experience

Seventy percent of the students had worked part-time during the school year and at least part-time in the summer. Almost 18% had worked during the summer only, and only 4% had worked part-time during the school year but not during the summer. Altogether, 92% of the entering freshmen had had some kind of work experience before coming to UMCP.

Seven percent had not earned any money at all during the past year, 4% earned less than $99, 13% earned between $100 and $499, 27% earned between $500 and $999. The largest group of students (36%) earned between $1,000 and $2,999, while 13% had incomes of $3,000 or more last year.

When asked what would be their work status during their freshman year, 41% said they did not plan to work, 36% would work off-campus, 1% would work for academic credit as part of a departmental program, 4% would work in the federally funded work-study program, while 12% would take other on-campus jobs.

Social and Political Attitudes

When asked which of a series of issues was most important for society to resolve, 40% chose the economy/inflation, followed by racism (20%), ecology/pollution (12%), integrity of those in power (9%), the energy crisis (4%), and sexism (2%).

Half the students (50%) saw themselves as generally keeping up to date with political affairs, while 21% did not. Forty-three percent would support the use

of nuclear power as an energy source, while 20% would not. Almost half (48%) of the students would support gun control legislation, while 19% would not.

Returning to attitudes within the academic setting, 21% of the students agreed that the proposed federal budget cuts for education would reduce the quality of their education, 36% disagreed, and 37% were neutral. Fifty-five percent of the incoming freshmen believed that most high school students would cheat on an exam if they thought they wouldn't get caught, while 20% disagreed. And what would they most likely do if they witnessed an act of cheating? More than half the students (56%) would most likely ignore the incident, a smaller group (20%) would speak to the individual involved in the incident, 7% said they would discuss it with their advisor, 2% would inform the exam proctor, and only one-tenth of one percent would inform the department head. Approximately 10% of the students would inform the instructor, but most of them (8%) would do so anonymously.

Sex Role Attitudes

The majority of the freshmen (72%) disagreed with the assertion that women should worry less about their rights and more about becoming good wives and mothers, while 7% of the students agreed with the statement. Nearly half (48%) the students had mothers who worked outside the home while they were growing up. Forty-seven percent of the students believed that some professions were more suitable for men than women, while 29% disagreed. About one-third (32%) of the students believed that women earning as much as their dates should bear the expenses equally when they go out together, 30% disagreed, and 38% were neutral. Also, about 44% of the students thought it was all right to live together before marriage, while 21% did not, and 35% were neutral.

Adjustment to College

As noted by Chickering (1969), the college years are a time of challenge

and potential for growth, and may be somewhat anxiety-provoking at first. This is illustrated by the fact that over 80% of the students surveyed said that they sometimes felt anxious about succeeding in college (only 8% did not). More specifically, students were asked to indicate various aspects of adjusting to college which they expected to be either easiest or hardest. Student responses to these questions are presented in Table 2 below.

Table 2.

Which do you expect to be the easiest/hardest part of adjusting to college?

	Rank	Easiest	Rank	Hardest
1. Getting to meet and know other students - both sexes	1	31%	8	6%
2. Deciding whether to get involved in campus activities	2	20%	6	7%
3. Becoming a more critical and independent thinker	3	14%	7	6%
4. Selecting a field of study and/or a career	4	14%	3	12%
5. Earning satisfactory grades	5	8%	5	9%
6. Meeting financial expenses	6	6%	4	12%
7. Budgeting time	7	3%	2	19%
8. Studying efficiently	8	1%	1	28%

Students' Concerns and Use of Counseling Services

Approximately two-thirds (65%) of the students expressed an interest in seeking counseling regarding educational-vocational plans, and 10% were interested in seeking counseling regarding emotional-social concerns.

Some of the students' specific concerns included: wanting to improve their writing ability (87%); wanting to improve their ability to speak before a group (84%); wanting to be more assertive (68%); wanting to learn to cope more

efficiently with stress (55%); and wanting to improve their spelling skills (53%). Finally, half of the students (50%) were concerned with their ability to finance their education, in comparison to 30% who were not, and 20% who were neutral.

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